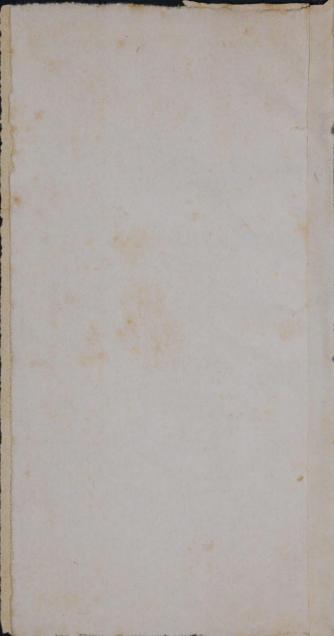
BIBLIOTECA SARFATTI



501 op 3 170 K 6736197 D 9840833

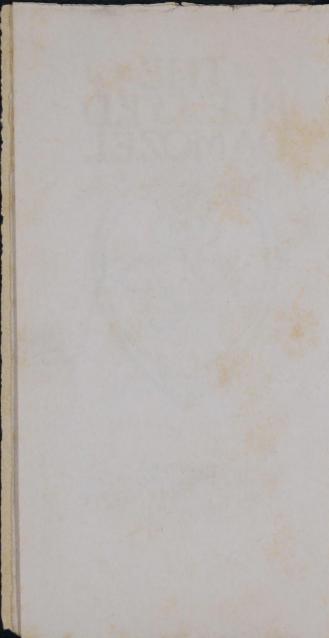


THE BLESS-EDDAMOZEL MY SISTER'S SLEEP ETC. BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI First Edition, March 31st, 1903. Reprinted April 2nd, 1903. Fourth Thousand.

BLESSED DAMOZEL



EDINBURGH
R. GRANT & SON, 107 PRINCES ST.
LONDON: R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON
MDCCCCIII



O THE O O BLESSED DAMOZEL



THE blessed Damozel leaned out

From the gold bar of Heaven: Her blue grave eyes were deeper much

Than a deep water, even.

She had three lilies in her hand,

And the stars in her hair were
seven.

II

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,

No wrought flowers did adorn, But a white rose of Mary's gift On the neck meetly worn; And her hair, lying down her back, Was yellow like ripe corn. Herseemed she scarce had been a day

One of God's choristers;

The wonder was not yet quite gone

From that still look of hers; Albeit to them she left, her day Had counted as ten years.

IV

(To one it is ten years of years
... Yet now, here in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me,—her
hair

Fell all about my face . . .

Nothing: the Autumn-fall of leaves.

The whole year sets apace.)

V

It was the terrace of God's house
That she was standing on,—
By God built over the sheer depth
In which Space is begun;
So high, that looking downward

thence,
She could scarce see the sun.

VI

It lies from Heaven across the flood

Of ether, as a bridge.

Beneath, the tides of day and night

With flame and blackness ridge The void, as low as where this earth

Spins like a fretful midge.

VII

But in those tracts, with her, it was

The peace of utter light
And silence. For no breeze may
stir

Along the steady flight Of seraphim; no echo there, Beyond all depth or height.

VIII

Heard hardly, some of her new friends,

Playing at holy games,

Spake, gentle-mouthed, among themselves,

Their virginal chaste names; Andthesouls, mounting up to God, Went by her like thin flames. And still she bowed herself, and stooped

Into the vast waste calm;
Till her bosom's pressure must
have made

The bar she leaned on warm, And the lilies lay as if asleep Along her bended arm.

X

From the fixt lull of heaven, she saw

Time, like a pulse, shake fierce Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove,

In that steep gulph, to pierce The swarm: and then she spake, as when

The stars sang in their spheres.

XI

"I wish that he were come to me, For he will come," she said.

"Have I not prayed in solemn heaven?

On earth, has he not prayed?

Are not two prayers a perfect strength?

And shall I feel afraid?

XII

"When round his head the aureole clings,

And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand, and go with him
To the deep wells of light,

And we will step down as to a stream

And bathe there in God's sight.

XIII

"We two will stand beside that shrine,

Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps tremble continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And where each need, revealed,
expects

Its patient period.

XIV

"We two will lie i' the shadow of That living mystic tree, Within whose secret growth the

Sometimes is felt to be, While every leaf that His plumes touch

Saith His name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him— I myself, lying so—

The songs I sing here; which his mouth

Shall pause in, hushed and slow, Finding some knowledge at each pause

And some new thing to know."

XVI

(Alas! to her wise simple mind These things were all but known

Before: they trembled on her sense,—

Her voice had caught their tone.

Alas for lonely Heaven! Alas For life wrung out alone!

XVII

Alas, and though the end were reached?...

Was thy part understood

Or borne in trust? And for her sake

Shall this too be found good?—
May the close lips that knew not prayer

Praise ever, though they would?)

XVIII

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves

Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens,
whose names

Are five sweet symphonies:— Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen, Margaret, and Rosalys.

XIX

"Circle-wise sit they, with bound locks

And bosoms coveréd;

Into the fine cloths, white like flame,

Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for
them

Who are just born, being dead.

XX

"He shall fear haply, and be dumb.
Then I will lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

IXX

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,

To Him round whom all souls Kneel—the unnumber'd solemn heads

Bowed with their aureoles:

And Angels, meeting us, shall sing

To their citherns and citoles.

XXII

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord

Thus much for him and me:—
To have more blessing than on
earth

In nowise; but to be
As then we were,—being as then
At peace. Yea, verily.

XXIII

"Yea, verily; when he is come We will do thus and thus:

Till this my vigil seem quite strange

And almost fabulous;

We two will live at once, one life; And peace shall be with us."

XXIV

She gazed, and listened, and then said,

Less sad of speech than mild: "All this is when he comes,"

She ceased;

The light thrilled past her, filled With Angels, instrong level lapse.

Her eyes prayed, and she smiled,

XXV

(I saw her smile.) But soon their flight

Was vague 'mid the poised spheres.

And then she cast her arms along The golden barriers,

And laid her face between her hands,

And wept. (I heard her tears.)



MY SISTER'S SLEEP.

1

She fell asleep on Christmas Eve, Upon her eyes' most patient calms

The lids were shut; her uplaid arms

Covered her bosom, I believe.

H

Our mother, who had leaned all day

Over the bed from chime to chime,

Then raised herself for the first time,

And as she sat her down, did pray.

III

Her little work-table was spread
With work to finish. For the
glare

Made by her candle, she had care

To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a good moon up,

Which left its shadows far within;

The depth of light that it was in

Seemed hollow like an altar-cup.

V

Through the small room, with subtle sound

Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove

And reddened. In its dim alcove

The mirror shed a clearness round.

VI

I had been sitting up some nights,

And my tir'd mind felt weak and blank;

Like a sharp strengthening wine, it drank

The stillness and the broken lights.

В

VII

Silence was speaking at my side
With an exceedingly clear
voice:

I knew the calm as of a choice Made in God for me, to abide.

VIII

I said, "Full knowledge does not grieve:

This which upon my spirit dwells

Perhaps would have been sorrow else:

But I am glad 'tis Christmas Eve."

IX

Twelve struck. That sound, which all the years

Hear in each hour, crept off; and then

The ruffled silence spread again,

Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat.

Her needles, as she laid them down,

Met lightly, and her silken gown

Settled: no other noise than that.

XI

"Glory unto the Newly Born!"
So, as said angels, she did
say;

Because we were in Christmasday,

Though it would still be long till dawn.

XII

She stood a moment with her hands

Kept in each other, praying much;

A moment that the soul may touch

But the heart only understands.

XIII

Almost unwittingly, my mind Repeated her words after her;

Perhaps tho' my lips did not stir;

It was scarce thought, or cause assign'd.

XIV

Just then in the room over us

There was a pushing back of
chairs,

As some who had sat unawares
So late, now heard the hour,
and rose.

XV

Anxious, with softly stepping haste,

Our mother went where Margaret lay,

Fearing the sounds o'erhead
—should they

Have broken her long-watched for rest!

XVI

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned;

But suddenly turned back again;

And all her features seemed in pain

With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

XVII

For my part, I but hid my face, And held my breath, and spake no word:

There was none spoken; but I heard

The silence for a little space.

XVIII

Our mother bowed herself and wept.

And both my arms fell, and I said:

"God knows I knew that she was dead."

And there, all white, my sister slept.

XIX

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn

A little after twelve o'clock
We said, ere the first quarter
struck,

"Christ's blessing on the newly born!"



FROM THE CLIFFS: NOON

Ī

The sea is in its listless chime: Time's lapse it is, made audible,— The murmur of the earth's large shell.

In a sad blueness beyond rhyme
It ends: sense, without thought,
can pass

No stadium further. Since time was,

This sound hath told the lapse of time.

II

No stagnance that death wins,
—it hath

The mournfulness of ancient life,

Always enduring at dull Strife.

As the world's heart of rest and wrath,

Its painful pulse is in the sands.

Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
Grey and not known, along its path,



PAX VOBIS

Ι

'Tis of the Father Hilary.
He strove, but could not pray:

so took

The darkened stair, where his feet shook

A sad blind echo. He kept up Slowly. 'Twas a chill sway of air

That autumn noon within the stair,

Sick, dizzy, like a turning cup. His brain perplexed him, void and thin:

He shut his eyes and felt it spin;

The obscure deafness hemmed him in.

He said: "The air is calm outside."

II

He leaned unto the gallery
Where the chime keeps the
night and day:

It hurt his brain,—he could not pray.

He had his face upon the stone: Deep 'twixt the narrow shafts.

his eye

Passed all the roofs unto the sky

Whose greyness the wind swept alone.

Close by his feet he saw it shake With wind in pools that the rains make:

The ripple set his eyes to ache. He said, "Calm hath its peace outside."

III

He stood within the mystery Girding God's blessed Eucharist: The organ and the chaunt had ceased:

A few words paused against his ear,

Said from the altar: drawn round him,

The silence was at rest and dim. He could not pray. The Bell shook clear And ceased. All was great awe,
—the breath
Of God in man, that warranteth
Wholly the inner things of Faith.
He said: "There is the world
outside."



NOTE

The Poems which go to make up this, the second of the Roses of Parnassus, were written by Rossetti when a youth, and first published in The Germ, in 1850. They were afterwards subjected to careful revision in many minor details before they reappeared in the still copyright Edition of his Poems, published in 1881. The reprint in this volume, therefore, is from the original version of the poems, and for this reason has a value all its own, apart from any interest one may feel in the critical question whether the original or the later version is to be preferred. Any one wishing to compare the variations should note that Pax Vobis was afterwards reprinted as World's Worth and From the Cliffs: Noon, as Sea Limits. titles of The Blessed Damozel. and My Sister's Sleep, remain unchanged.

THIS EDITION OF THE BLESSED DAMOZEL AND OTHER POEMS BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, IS THE SECOND OF THE 'ROSES OF PARNASSUS.' IT IS DECORATED BY JOSEPH W. SIMPSON: PRINTED IN EDINBURGH BY TURNBULL AND SPEARS: PUBLISHED BY R. GRANT & SON, EDINBURGH AND R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON, LONDON: MDCCCCIII

ROSES OF PARNASSUS

IN THREE STYLES OF BINDING: STIFF PAPER COVERS, 6D NET

JAPANESE YELLUM, GILT TOP AND MARKER, 1/- NET

SOFT PERSIAN CALF WITH DESIGN IN GILT, 2/6 NET

I. RUBÁIYÁT OF MAR KHAYYÁM: FITZGERALD'S TRANSLATION

II.THE BLESSED DAMOZEL ETC.: BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

In Preparation

III. THE WHITE ROSE ANTHOLOGY:

THE ODES OF JOHN KEATS: THE RED ROSE ANTHOLOGY: THE SENSITIVE PLANT, BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY: THE YELLOW ROSE ANTHOLOGY







